

**MR. HARRY S. TRUMAN**, who arrives in London tomorrow, is a "man of the people"; but during his brief visit to this country he will move in the suitably rarefied circles that should surround an ex-President of the U.S.A. At Oxford and at the Pilgrims Dinner on Thursday night Lord Halifax will be his mentor; and Mr. Truman is scheduled to see more academic gowns and white ties than cloth caps.

When Mr. Truman's visit was first mooted many months ago it was proposed that he should address a mass rally sponsored



MR. TRUMAN IN PARIS

by the various Anglo-American societies working in London. With Sir Winston Churchill in the chair this meeting would have been a complement to the great post-war meeting at Fulton, Missouri, where President Truman presided and Mr. Churchill delivered one of his greatest orations.

The Foreign Office, however, was not enthusiastic. This, they pointed out, is an American election year. Mr. Truman's remarks might well inflame political passions in his own country. It would be most inadvisable that this should happen on a British public platform, etc., etc. The whole scheme was quietly dropped.

#### Audible Auden

AT ten minutes to five last Monday evening the authorities of the Shetlandian

Theatre in Oxford bowed to the inevitable and unlocked the doors leading to the topmost gallery. For his inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry, Mr. W. H. Auden had drawn an almost uncomfortably full house. It was a hot evening, and all windows were firmly closed.

Before the new Professor arrived, Dr. Enid Starkie hustled happily to and fro, determined to enjoy the maiden voyage of the craft she had done so much to launch in the miserable depths of winter. Sir Maurice Bowra, the most eminent supporter of Sir Harold Nicolson's nearly successful candidature for the Poetry Chair, was also present.

The lecture itself ran rather longer than expected, and a few people with six o'clock appointments had to pick their way out. One of them, who clumped to the door with an unlit cigarette in his mouth, had this offending object dexterously seized from his lips by the Vice-Chancellor's Bedell as he reached the exit.

The new Professor began with a modest disclaimer of any right to his new status. In what followed the only evidence of his being anything but entirely qualified for the chair was the increasingly vertiginous angle of his academic cap. All was well; at the end of his lecture it was still on his head.

#### Black and Tan

AN American manufacturer of cosmetics is, I hear, developing a pill that turns people brown. For some time doctors have been using a drug extracted from citrus peel oil, 8-methoxypsoralen, to protect patients with skins that are particularly sensitive to sunlight. Now certain limited tests seem to show that an offshoot of this drug will even produce a protective tan on people who shun the sun.

If white people can be made

# PEOPLE and THINGS: By ATTICUS

brown, can black people be made white? Dr. P. R. Bettley, the editor of the British Journal of Dermatology, tells me that there is no chemical reason why such a step should not be possible within the foreseeable future. A great deal of basic research on the nature of

pigmentation is being done in America, which has a near monopoly on money—if not brains—for projects in this field.

It is possible, it seems, that within the next twenty years men will be able to change the colour of their skin *ad lib.* by

swallowing the right pills. Colour may yet be easier to eliminate than the colour bar.

#### From the Quai d'Orsay

SENIOR Foreign Office officials always watch with a shrewd eye the debut in London of unfamiliar negotiator from

abroad. M. Maurice Faure, Secretary of State at the Quai d'Orsay, who spent an arduous Friday afternoon talking to Mr. Anthony Nutting, the Minister of State about the Bunkton project, has, I am told, made an extremely good initial impression on his first visit here.

There are, incidentally, some close parallels between Faure and Mr. Nutting. For one thing, they hold equivalent posts, though the labels are confusingly different. For another, they are both exceptionally young for their responsibilities; the French Secretary of State is only thirty-four; the British Minister of State is thirty-six. Both men are very able and both are ambitious.

M. Faure—no relation, by the way, of Edgar Faure, the ex-Premier—was appointed by M. Mollet after the last General Election. His expertise on Franco-German problems is outstanding, and his energy and skill played a big part in the recent complicated agreement on the Saar.

#### Sitting Painters

BRITISH artists have been curiously slow, I find, in applying for some of the most attractive American travel grants ever offered in this country. On Thursday and Friday Mr. Trenchard Cox, of the Victoria and Albert, and a committee that includes Professor Robin Darwin and Lady Rothenstein will meet at the English Speaking Union to award six travelling fellowships worth nearly £800. These have been given by the Houghton family—the makers of Steuben glass—for "men and women of British nationality connected with the decorative or fine arts, aged between thirty and fifty, who are well established in their profession." Those chosen will be able to spend up to three months in the United States.

Museum men have rolled up in droves, and architects are well represented, but only one serious application has come from "a person who actually does things with his hands."

In the face of this surprising bashfulness the Trenchard Cox committee plans to hold back one of the grants while it ponders how to get "well-established" artists to apply for one of the best gift horses ever offered.

#### Bagpipes of England

I DOUBT whether any staunch Scot is really hurt by the derisive Sassenach leer that

Highland bagpipes are incapable of rendering the National Anthem, but I am now, in any case, assured by an Englishman, Mr. Henry Starck—who runs a miniature, five-man factory making bagpipes in Kentish Town Road—that the Brian Boru Chromatic Bagpipes invented by his father have a sufficiently wide range to do everything Highland bagpipes do and play the National Anthem into the bargain.

Mr. Starck's somewhat incongruous Camden Town has been flourishing since



MR. STARCK AT WORK

1876. A certain William Ross, whom Queen Victoria appointed as her Pipe Major, then approached Mr. Starck's grandfather—a fute-maker—with the proposal that together they should manufacture and try to popularise bagpipes among the uncivilised English. After an involuntary shudder, old Mr. Starck apparently decided the scheme was a sound one and the partnership was established.

The present Mr. Starck—who, despite the Scottish associations of his life's work, has refrained from so much as setting foot north of the Border—tells me that a set of bagpipes now costs between £12 and £40 (excluding purchase tax), depending on whether imitation ivory, real ivory or sterling silver is used in the manufacture. Last year he sold 256 sets, most of them going to New Zealand and Canada, though he also lists among his clients the Arab Legion and the Hongkong Police.

#### Airborne

THE news that Sir Victor Tait, Sir Harold Wiltshire, and Sir William Cushman are leaving B.O.A.C. at the end of June has produced this comment around London Airport: "It looks as though the corporation is starting a knight shift."